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France: Yesterday's election returns give the Pompidou camp cause for renewed optimism.

Pompidou's remarkably strong 44 percent--three percent above what the pollsters predicted and more than De Gaulle himself received on the first ballot in 1965--contrasts sharply with runner-up Poher's low 23 percent and moderate Socialist Defferre's humiliating five percent.

Poher's poor showing, along with the fact that Communist candidate Duclos received over 21 percent, will enable the Gaullists effectively to attack Poher on the grounds that a second-ballot victory for him would be absolutely dependent on Communist support. Moreover, in order to win on the second ballot, Poher would have to pick up not only all first-ballot Communist and Socialist votes, but also some support from those who voted for "new left" candidates Rocard and Krivine. Thus, Poher's chances of winning in the runoff on 15 June have now decreased.

Another important consequence of the election will be to increase the leverage of the Communist Party in its relations with the non-Communist left. Duclos' trouncing of Defferre in the "election within an election" will add strength to the argument that without Communist support the left is not a viable political force in France.

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Latin America: Venezuela's request that the Rockefeller mission postpone today's visit will probably encourage other governments to request postponement or cancellation of visits scheduled for later this month.

President Frei of Chile told the US ambassador last week that he would receive the governor with respect and dignity, but feared that Santiago would have to be turned into an armed camp to deal with demonstrations that could be the largest anti-US manifestations in Chile in many years. Argentine authorities may also request cancellation in view of the recent trouble they have had with students.

Demonstrations and possibly some violence were being planned by Venezuelan students and extremist groups, but they probably would not have been any more serious than those already encountered by the governor and his party.

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Finland: Negotiations between the liberal and conservative wings of the Finnish Communist Party, held at the urging of the Soviets, have not resulted in significant concessions by either side.

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The liberal wing, caught between Soviet pressure and rank-and-file demands that the liberal decisions of the 15th party congress be carried out, has become demoralized. Instead of taking any action on its own part, it is gambling on conservative intransigence as the catalyst in future party developments. Since the conservative walkout from the party congress and the subsequent factional conference in late April, the conservatives have adhered to their position that remaining in the party is tied to satisfaction of their demands. The liberals, on the other hand, have demanded an end to factionalism and a return to party discipline.

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Congo (Kinshasa): The army has been placed on an "indefinite alert" as rumors continue to circulate that former mercenary leader Jean Schramme is preparing new operations against the Kinshasa government. Schramme left Brussels in mid-April, and his present whereabouts are unknown. Rumors that he is in Angola are possibly being exploited by the Portuguese to wage a war of nerves against the Congolese regime in hopes of forcing President Mobutu to curb the activities of Congo-based Angolan insurgents. Mobutu's reaction thus far has been remarkably relaxed and low-key, but the edginess of army units in Katanga over the rumors could result in disorders.

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